

Summary Minutes
Operations & Scheduling Committee
Friday, December 6, 8:30 a.m.

Directors: Robert Storer, Dave Hudson, Jay Howard
Staff: Ruby Horta, Andrew Smith, John Sanderson, Pranjali Dixit
Public: None

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Director Storer.

1. Approval of Agenda

The Committee approved the agenda.

2. Public Communication

None.

3. Approval of Minutes of November 1, 2024

The Committee approved the minutes.

4. Monument Free Program Update

Mr. Dixit reported on the Monument Free program, launched in July 2019 with weekday service on routes 11, 14, and 16, and expanded to include weekend service on routes 311, 314, and 316 in July 2022. This program serves communities facing significant socioeconomic challenges, with a high proportion of essential workers. He noted that the program is being funded by the California Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) and has experienced a stronger recovery compared to other free route services. Mr. Dixit emphasized that the program's long-term sustainability relies on continued LCTOP funding or the identification of alternative funding sources. Director Storer requested that information regarding the Title VI equity analysis be included for the Board's consideration.

5. Choice in Aging MOU Extension

Mr. Sanderson informed the committee that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Choice in Aging (CiA), an adult social service agency, accounted for a significant portion of County Connection's paratransit ridership, leading to the 2019 pilot program utilizing SilverRide, an accessible Transportation Network Company (TNC), to address service challenges for CiA clients unable to use traditional paratransit. He noted that following a successful pilot, the program became permanent in 2023, with County Connection reimbursing CiA. He added that the program has demonstrated positive outcomes, including improved on-time service, reduced no-shows for CiA programs, and decreased demand on County Connection's LINK paratransit, while also offering a lower cost per trip compared to LINK. The Committee forwarded to the Board the staff's request for approving a one-year extension of the contract with SilverRide.

6. Spring Bid Update

Mr. Dixit provided a brief overview of the Spring Bid changes, highlighting increased run times to address traffic congestion, and to improve on-time performance and operator breaks, particularly during weekday peak hours and weekends. He noted that most schedule adjustments stem from increased traffic congestion. He also pointed out that Route 301 is being extended to Safeway in Shadelands to provide weekend access to the grocery store for residents in that area.

Director Howard inquired about the operator shortage and strategies to address it. Mr. Smith discussed the "Faces" campaign aimed at attracting new operators, while Ms. Horta highlighted the renewal of the employee referral program and the signing bonus approved by the Board in November.

7. Approval of Revised Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP)

Ms. Horta reported that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires transit agencies to develop and maintain Safety Management Systems (SMS) through their Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans (PTASP). County Connection's PTASP, approved in 2020, is updated annually. She highlighted that the latest update incorporates policies addressing assaults on transit workers, including measures such as passenger suspension policies and training programs. The Committee forwarded to the Board the staff's request for approving the revised Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP).

8. Automated Driving Systems (ADS) Demonstration Project Update

Mr. Sanderson noted that ridership on this demonstration project remains low, reaching only 117 rides since its inception last September. He attributed this low ridership in part to the lack of morning and early afternoon service to/from the County Hospital and explained that the project team is moving forward with plans to add earlier service.

9. Monthly Ridership Reports

Mr. Dixit shared that ridership has continued to increase when compared to last year, with the largest percentage gains being seen in weekend service, and that systemwide productivity was above pre-COVID levels. Mr. Dixit observed a correlation between the increase in missed trips and the decrease in available bus operators. Director Howard inquired about Clipper 2.0, to which Mr. Dixit responded that all buses are equipped with the new machines and MTC has tentatively scheduled the Clipper 2.0 rollout for April 2025.

Mr. Sanderson shared that ridership remained flat year over year. He highlighted that productivity continued to exceed the standard of 1.5 passengers per hour and on-time performance reached 98% marking 26 consecutive months of exceeding the standards.

10. Committee Comments

None

11. Future Agenda Items

None

12. Next Scheduled Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for January 3 at 8:30 a.m. in the Small Community Meeting Room at the Pleasant Hill City Hall located at 100 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, CA.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:52 a.m.

Minutes prepared and submitted by: Pranjali Dixit, Manager of Planning